

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: June 27, 2013

Meeting No.: 168

Project: Jefferson Square at Washington Hill Phase II

Phase: Work Session

Location: E. Baltimore Street, N. Washington Street, Fairmont Avenue, and N. Wolfe Street

PRESENTATION:

Development Partner Drew Chapman, Jefferson Apartment Group, began the discussion noting that the development team had responded to comments from the prior UDARP meeting, and wished to discuss their initial design responses and to receive additional feedback prior to their next Schematic Presentation to the Panel. The project program presented in the prior meeting remains the same. In addition to the Architect, Imran Kifayat and Edsel Arnold (by phone) of Preston Partnership, Brent Martin of LandDesign presented the following design responses:

1. The context of the adjacent site and surrounding neighborhood were reviewed.
2. Major changes were summarized as follows:
 - a. Engage and activate the street
 - b. Address parking and loading
 - c. “Calm” the design
 - d. Clarify streetscape design
 - e. Prior design presentation and proposed modifications were reviewed for these major components
3. Site Plan
 - a. The prior site plan was reviewed, with clear indications of resident/visitor entries, private terraces, garage entry and loading dock, transformers and leasing office entry.
 - b. A revised site plan includes the following responses to comments:
 - i. Increased engagement with streets and Fairmont Park with 10 new private stoops and 11 new private terraces
 - ii. The loading dock and garage entry have been split to reduce impact on pedestrian experience. Loading and transformers remain on Baltimore Street. Garage entry is moved to North Wolfe Street.
4. Massing and Elevations

The design team has made a concerted effort to “calm” the massing and elevations by:

 - a. Reducing the variety and number of massing shifts on each elevation
 - b. Reinforcing more consistency in the base and top
 - c. Simplifying the color and materials palette
 - d. Creating a hierarchy of primary entry and unit entry (stoops)
 - e. Modifying the corner towers, engaging them with the adjacent mass.

DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE PANEL AND DESIGN TEAM:

1. The panel appreciated the development team's responsiveness to prior comments and clarity of presentation both graphically and verbally. A discussion ensued on each of the following:
2. Site Plan
 - a. The panel agreed that the revised site plan significantly increased engagement with streets and Fairmont Park with 10 new private stoops and 11 new private terraces.
 - b. The loading dock and garage entry have been split to reduce impact on pedestrian experience. The loading dock appears to be aligned with the alley that is across Baltimore Street.
 - c. Loading and transformers remain on Baltimore Street. Garage entry is moved to North Wolfe Street. Landscaping between the transformers and loading bay will require careful coordination with the BG&E. The panel encouraged maintain the street trees along Baltimore Street to maintain a strong pedestrian experience.
3. Massing, Elevations and Streetscape
 - a. General Comments
 - i. Corner towers
 1. Engaged with adjacent building mass – a positive.
 2. Dual towers of generally equal composition and expression does not create a clear hierarchy. The panel requested the development team to consider an alternative to the street corner expression as a reduced tower or building corner.
 3. Expression is more traditional in appearance. The panel suggested that the initial expression was more contemporary. Incorporating the more contemporary tower, engaged w/ the adjacent mass, is more appealing.
 - ii. The recessed balcony areas (applicable to all facades) imply separate buildings. The panel indicated that most buildings in Baltimore were originally designed with party walls, and that breaks occurred at alleys. Balconies could be incorporated as industrial [expressed steel] projections or recessed into the facades. Railing detail remains a concern.
 - iii. Coloration is simpler, lighter and less ominous.
 - iv. Brick expression seems well conceived. The panel remains very concerned about the composite wall panel and bay detailing, window/door color and material, and requested additional information about detailing and final intent.
 - v. In lieu of 2 floors over 2 (cutting building mass in half,) consider 3 floors over one, 1 over 2 over 1, or 1 over 3.
 - vi. The panel suggested including a north arrow on the site plans, graphic scales, and context in the elevations across the streets.

- b. North Wolfe Street
 - i. Tower marking entrance to Fairmont Park seems appropriate. See comment above re: turning the corner at Baltimore Street.
 - ii. The massing has been reduced from 9 building masses to 3. The panel generally considers this a very positive shift. The panel was split - the development team may have eliminated one or two more than needed.
 - iii. Cornices are almost too strongly expressed, eliminating all industrial reference.
 - iv. Reconsider canopy on the mass to the right of the tower, which implies retail storefront.
 - v. Add intermediate masonry pier to garage opening.
 - vi. Reconsider building entrance on North Wolfe, and clearly express/differentiate from Stoops and Terraces
 - vii. Landscaping
 - 1. Stepped planter seems generous and appropriate
 - 2. Panel questioned bench adjacent to tenant terrace near Baltimore Street.
 - 3. Railing details to be further developed
 - 4. Mark garage entrance closer to sidewalk (see Context photos, bottom row, 3rd from right at lower scale.)
- c. Baltimore Street
 - i. The sloped street and narrow width from curb to building face severely limit street engagement. Is there any improvement that can be made to activate this street façade?
 - ii. Towers seem unnecessary at this façade; see comments above.
 - iii. Corner at North Wolfe Street should engage with adjacent mass.
 - iv. Reduced Recessed balcony slots are not necessary; see comments above.
 - v. Consider connecting water tables at corner buildings.
 - vi. Center arched opening and grand stair is not successful. If this is a building entrance, could it be similar to the recessed entry as shown at North Washington Street?
 - vii. Transformer may be openings with screening vs. false windows.
 - viii. Landscaping
 - 1. Due to lack of setback from curb, there is not enough width to develop adequate transition to private terraces.
- d. North Washington Street
 - i. Tower marking entrance to Fairmont Park seems appropriate. See comment above re: turning the corner at Baltimore Street.
 - ii. The massing has been reduced from 11 building masses to 4. The panel generally considers this a very positive shift.
 - iii. Match brick of projected planter/terrace walls to main masonry rather than contrast.
 - iv. Center arched opening and grand stair is not successful.
 - v. Landscaping
 - 1. Due to lack of setback from curb, there is not enough width to develop adequate transition to private terraces.

2. Lower blank walls from of Fairmount Park tower toward Baltimore Street require additional consideration.
- e. Fairmount Park
 - i. Towers can return and engage some building mass to eliminate the “western stage front” appearance.
 - ii. Wall elevation at building mass east of the stair appears to be a blank wall. What is the design intent?

PANEL ACTION:

Working Session only- no formal recommendation.

Attending:

Imran Kifayat, Edsel Arnold (phone) – Preston Partnership
Brent Martin – LandDesign
Susan Williams – STV
Caroline Hecker – RMG
Drew Chapman – Jefferson Apartment Group
Dave Holmes – Capital Development
Kevin Litten - BBJ

UDARP Panel Members- Ms. Jones Allen, Messrs. Bowden, Burns and Haresign*

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Tamara Woods, Natasha Becker, Wolde Ararsa - Planning Department